



*New York City skyline.*

Our country was struck a savage blow on September 11, 2001 but the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) was hit the hardest of all. The 348 Firefighters killed on that day left precious few to attend the resulting funeral services and show the respect that New York's bravest so richly deserve. This story went out across the nation, and firefighters from coast to coast responded. On Saturday, October 27, 2001, a contingent of firefighters from DDSP New Cumberland, Letterkenny Army Depot, Navy Fire Department, Mechanicsburg, Harrisburg City, and Pleasant Hall Fire Department joined their brothers and sisters in this response. Including SFC Tony Botelho, an intrepid bus driver from the Reserve Center, and a few spouses, nineteen people in all, departed New Cumberland for New York City before daybreak.



*Bagpipers salute families of fallen NY firefighters.*

We arrived on Staten Island at about 8:30 a.m. and attended our first service. It was for a young Firefighter, one of many who were murdered by terrorists that fateful day. The funeral was held in a small Catholic Church; however, very visibly present was a large assembly of FDNY, NYPD, Port Authority Police, friends, and family members. We met Firefighters from as far away as Los Angeles, some from Chicago and DeKalb, Illinois, others from New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Vancouver, Canada—all were there to pay their respects and say good-bye to this brother, and to the other members of our collective family who gave their lives.

After attending several more services, we concluded our trip with a visit to "Ground Zero", or GZ. Passing through a considerable number of security barriers, none of us quite expected the sight we now saw—so up close. For the majority of us, it had been a personal pilgrimage, not only to come and pay our last respects but also to come to some sort of a closure for this incredible loss we feel.

Having arrived just after dusk, the site was shut down in preparation for the next day's Memorial Service, except for the lights. Against the darkness of the city skyline, the devastation

# DDSP Firefighters Attend NY Firefighters Funerals

**Robert C. Corkle Jr., Assistant Chief,  
DDSP Fire Department**

was flooded with spotlights. Even after a month had passed, piles of rubble were still smoldering hot; too hot to walk on unprotected. The smoke was accompanied by an acrid odor of gases emanating from fires burning below ground. The scene was intensified still by an eerie quiet, shocking beyond comprehension; we were left speechless for what seemed like minutes.

We solemnly toured the site including Fire Station 10, which faces the Twin Towers. Many of the Firefighters we met related stories of September 11, as if sharing the experience would ease the pain.

We were amazed at the outpouring of gratitude that was being directed towards us. Especially from all those working at GZ, because we were very honored and proud to be there among them. We are forever in the debt of those who gave and those who continue to give. The men and women working tirelessly week after week to recover bodies, clearing away the carnage left in the wake of this horrible devastation.



*DDSP firefighters enter ground zero.*

Merely because we are members of this closely-knit family of Firefighters, Police Officers and other Emergency Responders, we were regarded as heroes wherever we went. The people of New York City were gracious and giving beyond anything I have ever experienced. For that, I am eternally grateful. Our trip home was quiet, with an occasional outbreak of conversations about the day's events, college football games, and so on. Mostly, I think we were all just digesting what we had seen, heard, and felt that day.

It is my belief that on September 11, 2001, in one horrible

series of events, our great nation was brought together in a way that will not only carry us through this time of turmoil, but will inspire other nations. Through a coalition the likes of which the world has never seen, great nations will rid the world of this evil threat of terrorism forever. If anybody were losing his or her resolve to continue this campaign against terrorism, I would simply say—a visit to this hallowed place in Manhattan would strengthen your decision.

God Bless America!

Sfc. Anthony Botelho (Driver), James R. Derstine, Robert C. Corkle, Henry Hoffman, Melissa Hoffman, Scott Reichenbach, Tom Murry (HBGFD), Jeffery Propst (AJCC Site R), Ted Reed (Letterkenny FD), Drew Reed (PHFD) Pleasant Hall, Charles Fields (HBGFD), Greg Rhone (HBGFD), Dave Sweigert (HBGFD), Dan Soulier (HBGFD), Tim Sheely (NSA, LA), Dave Voyack, Barry Rudy, Kim Rudy, and Leonard Rutter took the trip to New York to honor the fallen firefighters.



*Ground zero, still smoldering after more than a month.*

## DDJC Remembrance

President Bush asked the people of the United States and places of worship to mark Friday, September 14, as a “National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for the Victims of the Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001.”

In response, Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, California (DDJC) employees organized a Memorial Observance.

The service began with a moment of silence and was followed by the singing of the National Anthem by DDJC Transportation Assistant Maureen Burrise. Tommie Jones,



*Team DDJC.*



*COL Edward Visker,  
DDJC Commander.*

DDJC Safety Officer, led the invocation and benediction.

“Today we express our sadness and concern for those who have died and for those who have suffered losses,” said Colonel Edward Visker, DDJC Commander. “We hang our heads momentarily in sorrow. Then we must take a deep breath and puff up our chests and muster our resolve to do our part to achieve victory.

“Any attack against our country and its people may stun us momentarily,” COL Visker continued, “but as history shows,

this nation will prevail. We will emerge from this attack stronger and with greater Resolve to prevail against the forces of hatred.

“[DDJC’s] non-negotiable contract with the American people remains—to provide support to our armed forces around the clock around the world,” COL Visker said. “And, our nation and our warriors depend on us. We must do it better than ever before and we must not let them down.

“We are strong; we are ready; and we will keep faith with our fallen comrades and their loved ones. And, we will fulfill our contract. We will prevail. God bless you and God bless America.”



*DDJC employees observe a moment of silence for the victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks.*